

Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/663,115	SCOTT, MARK
	Examiner Mark T. Le	Art Unit 3617

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to June 26, 2006.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-7, 10-18, 20-24.
3. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some*
 - c) None
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. The original abstract was too short, and phrases that can be implied, i.e. "... is disclosed" found in the original abstract, should not be used. Therefore, the original abstract has been replaced by the following new abstract with a more proper content.

ABSTRACT

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A rail car cushioning device is provided for connecting to a coupler. The rail car cushioning device includes an arrangement of a hydraulic cylinder, a piston assembly, and at least a valve assembly, which are configured with cooperating features to allow the device to be switchable between a locked mode and a cushioning mode. --.

2. The above amendment is treated as an obvious correction to minor informalities. However, should the above change be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

REASON FOR ALLOWANCE

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: It is noted that independent claims 1 and 24 have been amended to include a metering pin having a tapered cylindrical configuration, and they are now in condition for allowance. Note that the allowance of independent claims 1 and 24 is not determined solely on the basis of the tapered pin feature, but is rather based on the combination of the features recited in the instant claims and the relationships among said features. It is noted for example in Leben (US 6,814,348), piston 11 is provided with tapered pin 22, and Monaco (US

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6,357,612), applied in the Final Office action, includes piston 46 that does not have tapered pin. However, in the instant case, it would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art to combine Leben and Monaco to arrive at the instant claimed invention because the specific features of the piston assembly and the specific features of the valve assembly in the cushioning device, as recited in the instant claims 1 and 24, inherently produce an integral operating effect that is not suggested by Leban and Monaco. Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 24, and other pending claims depending therefrom are considered to be defined over the prior art of record.

4. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark T. Le whose telephone number is 571-272-6682. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri (2:00-8:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Samuel Morano can be reached on 571-272-6684. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


Mark T. Le
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3617

mle
7/10/06